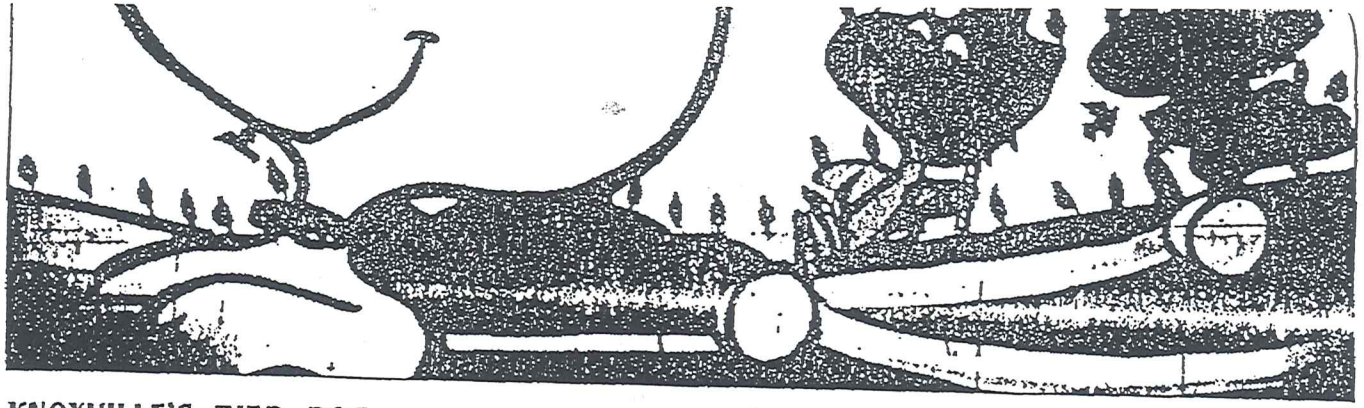

KNOXVILLE'S BIRD DOG — Blackbirds flock to Snoopy, Woodstock and friends on a Metropolitan Life Insurance Co. billboard in downtown Knoxville. The characters from *Peanuts* form a perch for feathered friends. AP

James Earl Ray's wife seeks divorce

Spouse of 13 years asks for share of book profit

By KIRK LOGGINS
Staff Writer

Convicted assassin James Earl Ray's wife sued him yesterday for divorce and for a share of the proceeds from his new book on the murder of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Anna Sandhu Ray, who married Ray at Brushy Mountain State Prison in 1978, cited "irreconcilable differences" and unspecified "inappropriate marital conduct" in the divorce petition she filed in Davidson County Circuit Court.

Anna Ray, 45, a self-employed artist, said she and her husband, who has been incarcerated since 1968, "separated" in 1987.

She said she and James Earl Ray, 61, "have accumulated almost no marital estate" except for the book he is about to publish, *Who Killed Martin Luther King? The True Story by the Alleged Assassin.*

Anna Ray, who lives in White House, Tenn., north of Nashville, said she is entitled to "a fair and equitable share" of the proceeds from the book.

National Press of Bethesda, Md., is preparing to ship "about 50,000" copies of the book, for release on Nov. 25, publisher Joel Joseph said yesterday.

RAY

Joseph said he does not believe Anna Ray is entitled to any royalties from the book.

"She didn't write the book, she didn't help him write the book and she didn't take care of him while he wrote the book," Joseph said.

The publisher said any royalties from the book will go to the James Earl Ray Legal Defense Fund.

James Earl Ray initially confessed to fatally shooting King as the civil rights leader stood on a motel balcony in Memphis on April 4, 1968.

Ray received a 99-year prison sentence when he pleaded guilty to King's murder in 1969, but he has subsequently repudiated his confession.

Joseph said yesterday that Ray "absolutely denies" killing King.

"He points his finger at the Federal Bureau of Investigation as having done it," Joseph said.

Ray escaped from Brushy Mountain State Prison in 1977 but was captured two days later within five miles of the remote Morgan County prison. He has attempted to escape from Brushy Mountain on two other occasions and is now housed at Riverbend Maximum Security Institution here.

Anna Ray's divorce petition was prepared by Hendersonville attorney Dulin Kelly and by famed California divorce lawyer Marvin Mitchelson.

Kelly said yesterday that Anna Ray quit visiting her husband in prison soon after her arm was broken by another inmate during one visit.

James Earl Ray "asked her not to prosecute [the other inmate] and she didn't," Kelly said.

"Now that she and her husband have got crosswise, she fears that the Klan is after her," Kelly said. "He has sent her word that he was watching her." ■

Alderman waives hearing, plans to resign

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